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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 002169

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [OREP](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#) [GAZA](#) [DISENGAGEMENT](#) [COUNTERTERRORISM](#) [ISRAELI](#) [PALESTINIAN](#) [AFFAIRS](#)

SUBJECT: UZI LANDAU TO CODEL SAXTON: DISENGAGEMENT WILL
ALLOW AL QAEDA TO MOVE INTO GAZA

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Knesset member and former Minister of Internal Security Uzi Landau told Codel Saxton that disengagement will allow al-Qaeda to move into Gaza. Landau proposed a joint working group between Congress and the Knesset to devise ways to combat international terrorism while still maintaining civil liberties and individual rights. He said he has "no trust in (PA President) Abbas" and thinks the U.S. and Europe should tie financial support for the Palestinians to PA success at stopping terror. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) In a March 31 meeting in Tel Aviv, Likud Knesset member and former Minister of Internal Security Uzi Landau met with Congressmen Jim Saxton and Geoff Davis to discuss terrorism and the disengagement plan. House staff member Tom Hawley joined the meeting, as did Emboffs, and a military escort from the Codel.

Disengagement

3. (C) Noting that he used to support PM Sharon, Landau said he believes that Sharon's plan for disengagement from Gaza is a "major, major mistake" and will strengthen terrorist organizations. He commented that, just as Hizballah "pushed us out of Lebanon," Hamas will now be able to claim the same achievement in Gaza. If Israel allows this trend to continue, it will be pushed "all the way to Jerusalem." Landau said he feels betrayed by the GOI, because disengagement was not the policy he voted for. He supported the idea of a referendum on disengagement, and blamed the Labor party's support for PM Sharon for the failure of a referendum initiative.

4. (C) Landau predicted that Israel's departure from Gaza will leave al-Qaeda an opening to move in, a problem for both Israel and the U.S. In response to staffer Hawley's skepticism that al-Qaeda would "set up in Israel," Landau commented that Gaza would no longer be "Israel" after disengagement. He cited an article by a former IDG general that he said shows that "excellent conditions" will exist for al-Qaeda to move into Gaza once Israel ends its security activities there. This "process will not lead to peace," Landau said.

5. (C) Landau predicted that the next session of the Knesset (scheduled to begin May 16) would be "politically hot." He contended that many Israelis view the territories as "our land." He recalled that the withdrawal of Israeli settlers from the Sinai created turmoil in Israel. In Landau's estimation, Israel is now moving Jews from their own place."

Financial Support to Abbas

6. (C) Landau expressed concern that the U.S. and Europe are now, in his view, offering the Palestinians generous financial support without any requirement for reforms, even after four years of terror that resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 Israelis. He called for financial consequences if the Palestinians do not stop terror, and for linkage between international financial support for the PA and PA performance.

7. (C) Landau asserted, and Congressmen Saxton concurred, that the U.S. and Israel need to demonstrate signs of resolve to terrorist organizations. The Israeli withdrawals from Lebanon and Gaza "leave the door open" to terror. The U.S. and Israel, Landau said, are now conveying a message that they will "break if organizations use terror" against them.

Opinion of Abbas

8. (C) In response to Congressman Saxton's request for a personal assessment of Abbas, Landau said Abbas is "like Arafat, but with a western suit and shaved... and (with) less personal charisma." He has "no trust in Abbas," citing what he said were Abbas' close relationship with Arafat since 1960, role as financier of the Munich Olympics massacre, and

Holocaust denials. Abbas, he charged, has said he objects to violence only because it has not worked for the Palestians; he could therefore change his mind at any time.

19. (C) When asked by Congressman Saxton about the level of tension between Abbas and Hamas, Landau responded that tension exists both as a political rivalry and in disagreements over "how to run the war." While expressing astonishment that "terrorist organizations" are allowed to run in the Palestinian elections, Landau acknowledged that Hamas administers the programs that "care for the people." He claimed that Abbas has promised the terrorist groups not to collect their weapons, and that the groups are now trying to bring in more weapons. Landau predicted that the current state of relative calm between Israelis and Palestinians would prove to be only the "silence before the storm." Congressman Saxton responded that Israel's adversaries have seemed to use periods of calm throughout Israeli history as a strategy to get concessions.

Congress/Knesset Working Group

10. (C) Landau suggested the creation of a joint working group between Congress and the Knesset to focus on fighting international terror while maintaining civil liberties. He called for greater intelligence sharing about terrorism among affected governments. Congressman Davis compared the proposed working group to the Cold War-era ACE Mobile force, which linked special force units from various countries together. He said everyone understood then that "an attack on one was an attack on all." Congressman Saxton called Landau's proposal an "excellent suggestion."

11.(U) Codel staff did not clear this message.

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